

John was honored at Utah's 5th Homeless Summit with an award from the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. His fiancé and sister both spoke at the event. Following are excerpts:



From Connie, John's fiancé: Our lives have changed dramatically. I have been sober from drugs for 4 years and off of alcohol for 2 ½ years. John has been sober for 2 plus years. With the help of permanent, supportive housing, we have both become productive citizens. John is a role model for all the people on the street. It is possible for people change their lives and begin living.

From John's sister: I am so thankful to God that [John] is no longer living on the street. There have been some dark moments when I supposed that he would just die that way. My heart was always torn after I spent time with him; wanting to help on one hand, and yet not wanting to enable on the other.

I remember one extreme day about five years ago when John called me and I picked him up. He was always grateful for anything that I would do for him. We went and got coffee and spent a nice afternoon together, but when it was over, I had to drop him back at a park. Going back to my house that night was chilling. It twisted me up because I knew that John only had my Mom's thin, old sleeping bag and would be freezing that night. I didn't know how to fix it.

Seeing my brother now in such a healthy way is a total celebration for my heart and soul. After about a month on his job at the U., he called me totally excited. He was overjoyed that they would actually pay him for a holiday and he didn't even have to work. It was so sweet, reminding me how much I take for granted.

It was great this summer knowing that I could depend on John. Not doubting my brother's sobriety and handing over my car keys, I rode my bike up on the Snowbird Hill Climb. He was up at the top cheering me on. He has always been a total support to me and I couldn't ask for a better brother. God's hand is so visible in John's life and recovery. What has seemed like a long, desperate struggle has in the end turned out so beautifully right. If there is someone in your life that doesn't quite understand their role in society, never give up on them. Everyone deserves a chance to shine – however long it takes.

